

**CWS****Neighbor Network** *Humanitarian Parole***neighbor
NETWORK**

The CWS Neighbor Network is a collective of community groups, churches, and other organizations who are welcoming refugees and humanitarian parolees to the United States through private community sponsorship.

Private sponsorship provides an additional resettlement pathway for newcomers whose home countries are no longer safe. By agreeing and preparing to sponsor, you and your community can provide a safe place to land for some of the world's most vulnerable people.

Helping someone begin their journey in a new country is both more rewarding and challenging than many people expect. To help ensure groups are prepared for the responsibilities of sponsorship, Neighbor Network groups are partnered with CWS staff who provide training,

resources, expertise, and remote technical assistance through the first 3-6 months after a newcomer arrives.

Humanitarian Parole Programs

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, the Biden administration announced *Uniting for Ukraine* (U4U), an emergency response program that would allow Ukrainians to temporarily resettle in the US with the support of a sponsor. In late 2022 and early 2023, the *Processes for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans* (CHNV) was established to extend a similar sponsorship opportunity to those populations.

Newcomers sponsored through these programs receive humanitarian parole status, which allows beneficiaries to live and work in the United States legally for up to two years.

Sponsors do not need to partner with CWS in order to sponsor, but for those who do, Neighbor Network staff provide resources and support throughout the sponsorship process.



Organizational Background

Church World Service (CWS) is a global humanitarian and development agency supported by 37 US Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches who came together in partnership to do what none of us could do as well alone: deliver relief and empower communities. The mission is to transform communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster. It is out of this mission that CWS works with local refugee resettlement offices and faith communities to engage them in welcoming newcomers to their neighborhoods and cities.

Transforming Communities

For over 75 years, CWS has known that welcoming newcomers to our communities is an essential way to make sure all of us are more compassionate and civically engaged. We embrace our new neighbors, knowing that together we have a brighter future—a future where all people will have the opportunity to grow and thrive.

Embracing new neighbors allows us to engage cross-culturally in our communities. It helps us build empathy, heal past prejudices, and create cultural understanding as we learn that newcomers are more similar to us than different.

Through decades of experience, CWS knows the importance of ensuring communities receive the support they need to welcome new neighbors.

Support Provided to Private Sponsor Groups



Dedicated CWS staff member to support your group during your sponsorship



Weekly technical assistance calls during the 90-day service period



Monthly technical assistance support calls for an additional 3-6 months



Experience-based training and technical support from resettlement experts

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Steps to Become a Private Sponsor Group

1

Form Your Group

Gather a group (5+) of community members interested in sponsoring a family or individual.

2

Complete the Online [CWS Interest Form](#)

Once this step is completed, a CWS staff member will reach out to you to set up an initial meeting to go over next steps.

3

Complete a Service Plan and MoU

CWS staff will review the Service Plan to make sure a plan is in place for providing services. Groups agree to CWS policies.

4

Complete Background Checks and Virtual Training

Links to self-pay background checks and a 4-hour virtual training will be provided by CWS staff for groups to complete.

5

Create a Sponsor Profile & Match with Beneficiaries

[Welcome Connect](#), the Welcome.US matching platform, connects sponsors with overseas beneficiaries who are looking for sponsorship.

6

Complete an I-134A

The [I-134A \(Online Request to be a Supporter and Declaration of Financial Support\)](#) is filed with USCIS and must be approved before a newcomer can travel. Processing times can range from a few weeks to multiple months.

7

Prepare for Arrival

Secure housing, furnishing, and additional funds as needed. CWS Private Sponsor Groups will receive pre-arrival coaching and resources.

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Frequently Asked Questions

How long is the duration of sponsorship?

The timeline of support from sponsors will vary based on individual beneficiary needs, community resources, processing time for government forms, and other factors. Generally, a CWS Private Sponsor Group should expect to financially support a beneficiary until after the beneficiary receives employment authorization and is able to work, which may take up to six months. CWS provides regular technical assistance during this time.

However, even after reaching financial stability, many newcomers still need social integration support for up to a year or more. Sponsors should be prepared to assist with more complicated aspects of life in the US, such as navigating the healthcare system or renewing public benefits, as needed for this longer duration. CWS staff work with PSGs to create a self-sufficiency plan that can guide service delivery even after hands-on staff support ends.

What are a Private Sponsor Group's responsibilities?

CWS Private Sponsor Groups (PSGs) commit to providing welcoming services to arriving newcomers for their first 90 days in the community. They secure and furnish initial housing, provide for initial basic needs, and make connections to relevant services, such as health care, education, and employment services. Most importantly, PSGs offer friendship and support to those adjusting to life in a new community.

What is the financial commitment to privately sponsor newcomers?

In order to approve an I-134A, USCIS will look for evidence that a sponsor could financially support a beneficiary for the duration of the two-year parole. In practice, newcomers are eligible for employment and benefits that provide them a source of income within a few months of arrival. Immediate financial needs will vary based on the cost of living in your area. CWS recommends raising enough for at least 3 months of living expenses for Ukrainians, Cubans, and Haitians, and at least 6 months for Venezuelans and Nicaraguans, who are not eligible for cash or food assistance.